

AN ADDITION TO THE LACERTILIAN FAUNA OF THE
SOLOMON ISLANDS.

BY EDGAR R. WAITE, F.L.S., Zoologist.

(Fig. 2).

The Trustees have received a fine female Gecko from Mr. Charles M. Woodford, British Resident, Solomon Group.

Mr. Woodford's knowledge of the fauna of the group under his administration led him to suggest that the Gecko was an undescribed species; though previously known, it indeed proves to be new to the Solomon Islands. This is the more interesting as the group has been so well worked by Messrs. Guppy and Woodford. In this connection Dr. G. A. Boulenger remarks¹:—"The fact that, in spite of the extent of the collection (over 200 specimens) and the special attention paid by the collector [Mr. Woodford] to this group of animals, only four species are thereby added to the herpetological list of the Solomons, shows that our knowledge of this part of the fauna approaches completion." In the paper quoted Boulenger gives a complete list (28) of the reptiles of the Solomon Group, to the date of publication. Several species have, however, been added since that time, and it is now my privilege to add another.

Mr. Woodford's Gecko proves to be:—

GYMNODACTYLUS LOUISIADENSIS, De Vis.

Ann. Rep. Brit. New Guinea, App. cc., 1892, p. 5, and Ann. Queensland Mus., ii., 1892, p. 11.

The type was obtained at Sudest Is. (Tagula Is.) Louisiade Archipelago. A species from Moroka, British New Guinea, was described and figured by Boulenger² under the name *G. loriv.* Dr. Franz Werner³ thoroughly reviewed these two forms and inclined to the belief that they are not specifically distinct. For present purposes I assume this to be so. Mr. Woodford's specimen, however, seems to be a typical example, differing from the type only in respect to arrangement of the colour bands, in having the internasal plates broken up into four, and the subdigital lamellæ and labial plates slightly different in number,

¹ Boulenger—Proc. Zool. Soc., 1888, p. 88.

² Boulenger—Ann. Mus. Civ. Sto. Nat. Genova, (2), xviii., 1897 (1898), p. 695, pl. vi.

³ Werner—Verh. Zool.-bot. Ges. Wien, li., 1901, p. 604.

In 1901 Mr. Samuel Garman⁴ reported on the reptiles of Mr. Alexander Agassiz's Expedition to the Barrier Reef, and described a member of the genus *Gymnodactylus* under the name *G. olivii*. He contrasts its characters with those of *G. pelagicus* and evidently did not consult the descriptions of *G. louisiadensis* or *G. lorie*. *G. olivii* is certainly identical with our specimen, agreeing with it in the disposition of the colour bands which, as above mentioned, differ somewhat from those of the type.

In *G. louisiadensis* there are but five body bands, the first of which, connecting the eyes across the occiput, is V-shaped; the disposition of the other bands is not mentioned, but their arrangement is probably similar to those of *G. lorie*. In this form there are three pairs of markings between the fore and hind limbs, and a fifth at the base of the tail. The markings are not in the form of bands, but consist of pairs of oblique streaks, each pair forming a V-like figure, those only of the nape and the base of the tail, however, produce a complete V.

In both Mr. Garman's and Mr. Woodford's examples the bands are six in number; the first is U-shaped, the second connects the shoulders, three occupy the space between the fore and hind limbs, and the sixth connects the thighs, having a much more anterior position than the last band in *G. louisiadensis* or *G. lorie*. These bands are incomplete below.

Of Dr. Werner's adult examples, one resembled *G. louisiadensis* the other *G. lorie*, while a young one exhibited eight pairs of spots or streaks. This author particularly refers to structural details, tabulated below, the characters of *G. olivii* and Mr. Woodford's specimens being now included.

Name.	Lamellæ under 4th toe.	Supralabials.	Rows of body tubercles.
<i>G. louisiadensis</i> ...	10-11	12	26
<i>G. lorie</i> ...	—	12	—
Dr. Werner, i. ...	18	14-15	26
" ii. ...	12	17-18	28
" iii. ...	12	11-13	22
<i>G. olivii</i> ...	—	13	24
Mr. Woodford ...	12	13	26

⁴ Garman—Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool. Harv. Coll., xxxix., 1901, p. i., pl. i., fig. 1.

In both examples which have been figured (*G. lorie* and *G. olivii*), the tail has been reproduced, and as usual in such cases the colour-pattern and distinctive scutation of the original member is lost. In our example the tail has not suffered mutation and opportunity is taken to illustrate its character. It is covered with flat juxtaposed scales which are smallest above, increasing in size towards the lower surface; those bordering the large inferior scutes are quite one-third the width of the scutes. The tubercles upon the upper and lateral aspects of the proximal portion, as far as the hinder edge of the first caudal colour band, are similar to those of the body; thence the arrangement assumes a distinctive character, the tubercles being confined to the upper surface and disposed in widely spaced transverse rows. Of these the first three are composed each of six tubercles, the two in front having a supplementary row of four tubercles anteriorly; the next five rows are formed each of four tubercles and the three following of two each only, the latter of which is but little differentiated from the ordinary scales. The tubercles occupy the proximal three-sevenths of the tail only.



Fig. 2.

As on the body, the markings are in the form of bands though of darker hue, and similarly they do not compass the lower surface. The colour increases in intensity posteriorly and the distal two-fifths is without markings. There are five dark bands on the tail, each twice the width of the interspaces, and on the median line above they are deeply incised before and behind. The accompanying figure (fig. 2) illustrates the features described.

The type was, as before stated, taken at Sudest Is. in the Louisiades, and the British Museum possesses examples from Fergusson Is., Woodlark Is., and British New Guinea. From the latter locality the types of *G. lorie* were obtained, Dr. Werner had three specimens from Dutch New Guinea, and Mr. Garman's *G. olivii* is recorded from Cooktown. Mr. Woodford

informs us that his example was taken in the chart drawer at the Government Residence, and that he has since seen another specimen about the grounds. During a subsequent conversation with Mr. Woodford, in Sydney, he told me that when disturbed this Gecko walks very high upon its legs, and curves its tail over its back in a menacing manner. The Queensland locality must, I think, be accepted with some reservation; Cooktown is the port of call for vessels trading to New Guinea, the Louisiades and the Solomon Group and it seems highly probable that the Lizard was obtained by some trader and taken to Cooktown, whence it passed into the hands of Mr. Agassiz's collectors. Further evidence will be required of the occurrence of this species in Australia before it will be safe to admit it as an undoubted member of our fauna.

On March 19th, more than two months after the above was penned, I received a letter from Mr. E. A. C. Olive: he writes:—"I have your letter of February 3rd with sketch of reptile enclosed. I think I must have obtained the original from New Guinea, as I do not recognise it as one of our local lizards, and I remember receiving a variety of specimens from that place."